

ROUTING

Top Secret

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Friday 20 October 1978

CG NIDC 78/245



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NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION

Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Friday, 20 October 1978.

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

CONTENTS

SYRIA-LEBANON: Views on Conference Page 1

ZAMBIA-RHODESIA: Raid on ZAPU Page 2

NAMIBIA - SOUTH AFRICA: Meeting Page 3

BANGLADESH: Reports of Plotting Page 6

BRIEFS Page 9

India

SYRIA-LEBANON: Views on Conference

25X1 [] Public comments by Syrian officials on the recent meeting of some Arab Foreign Ministers in Lebanon indicate that Damascus believes the conference results offer a breathing space in which to start negotiations for a political settlement of Lebanon's problems. The Syrians are building up the forces of the Palestinians and Lebanese leftists, however, in case fighting resumes.

25X1 [] The Syrians probably calculate that, by agreeing at the conference to a unilateral Syrian withdrawal from some important positions in East Beirut, they have demonstrated their willingness to cool the situation. It is unlikely that the Syrians will agree to further withdrawals until they see some willingness by the Christian Maronite militias to reciprocate.

25X1 [] Foreign Minister Khaddam stated on Wednesday that the results of the Arab conference had created an opportunity to start negotiations with Lebanon's warring factions to "restore normalcy to the country." President Assad's brother Rifaat, moreover, is said to believe that a dialogue can be started with the relatively moderate elements of the Phalange and the National Liberal Parties, led respectively by Amin Jumayyil and Dany Shamun.

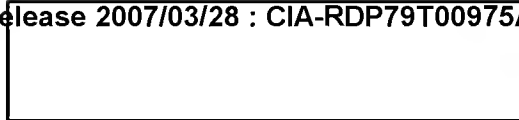
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25X1 [] The Syrians remain suspicious that hardline Maronite leaders such as Camille Shamun are unwilling to accept a compromise solution and will provoke new fighting. []

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[]



ZAMBIA-RHODESIA: Raid on ZAPU

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The Zambian Government regards the Rhodesian raid yesterday on the military headquarters of the Zimbabwe African People's Union at Ngwerere north of Lusaka as a major provocation because the strike was deeper than previous incursions and quite close to the capital. ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, in Lusaka at the time of the attack, will face heavy pressure from his military commanders to accept greater Soviet and Cuban assistance.

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With Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith still in the US, the raid illustrates Rhodesia's readiness to carry out military operations with little regard for their international political implications. The Rhodesians probably hope this attack and other such aggressive military operations in neighboring countries will make the war so costly to the Patriotic Front and the frontline countries that they will be more willing to make concessions in a negotiated settlement. Smith and his senior commanders realize they cannot end the insurgency by military means.

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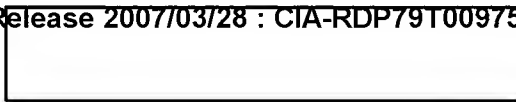
Mark Chona, Zambian President Kaunda's chief political adviser, told a US diplomat that Zambia "may be" compelled to take actions that would disrupt a settlement conference but that any action would depend on what the Rhodesians do next. Kaunda presumably hopes that the crisis will blow over and that he will not be forced to extreme positions.

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Chona also said the Zambian Government regards the attack as a deliberate move by Smith to scuttle political negotiations, and as final proof that Smith has no intention of yielding to black majority rule. Zambia suspects that South Africa was involved in preparations for the attack.

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The attack has put Kaunda in a tight spot. He still plans to use rail lines through Rhodesia to move imports and exports, but this will be a major embarrassment and a sore point in relations with Tanzania and Mozambique, which were angered by the decision. Kaunda faces heavy domestic pressure



to keep the lines open, and many Zambian officials will renew their efforts to withdraw Zambia from the struggle against Rhodesia.

[] Cuba will surely take this opportunity to pursue its longstanding offer of defense assistance to Zambia, //but Kaunda would probably prefer to discuss Nigeria's recent offer of troops to help defend against Rhodesian attacks. Kaunda may also decide to take the issue to the UN, which he has done in the past after Rhodesian provocations.// []

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NAMIBIA - SOUTH AFRICA: Meeting

[] *The three days of consultations on Namibia between South African Prime Minister Botha and five Western foreign ministers that ended yesterday have apparently reopened possibilities for eventual implementation of the Western settlement proposal. South Africa's position on the question of an election in Namibia, however, will delay the process for at least two months and complicate Western efforts to bring about a truce between South Africa and the South-West Africa People's Organization.*

[] The joint communique issued at the conclusion of the meetings calls for a resumption of preparations for UN participation in settlement efforts, but it also reasserts the opposing South African and Western positions on an election in Namibia; it reaffirms Pretoria's determination to hold an election in December and reiterates Western adherence to the UN Security Council's position that the outcome of this election would be null and void.

[] The tenor of the communique suggests that South Africa may agree to begin implementation of the UN plan after the December election is held. The communique stipulates that South Africa will try to persuade the winners of the election to consider achieving international recognition through the good offices of the UN special representative and the South African Administrator General.

[] This is a slight modification of Pretoria's earlier assertion that the winners would have a free hand either to draft a constitution that might perpetuate their rule or to opt for a second election under UN supervision.

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[REDACTED] The communique suggests that Western assurances have cleared up South Africa's reservations about UN plans to set up a UN military force as large as 7,500. According to the communique, the Secretary General now will select the national contingents and determine the actual strength of the force on the basis of consultations between his special representative and the Administrator General.

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[REDACTED] In response to the communique, a leader of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance--the Namibian group favored by South Africa--has declared that it will refuse to participate in a second election under UN supervision unless the UN plan is revised. On the other hand, leaders of the principal Namibian opposition groups have reasserted their earlier decisions to boycott the December election.

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[REDACTED] The Security Council's resolution of 29 September instructed the Secretary General to submit a progress report to the UN by 23 October. The Council is expected to meet for consideration of his report next week, and the African representatives at the UN have said they will demand additional sanctions against South Africa if it holds an election without UN participation. [REDACTED]

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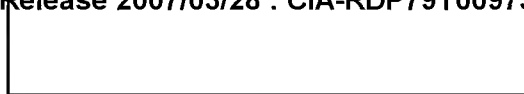
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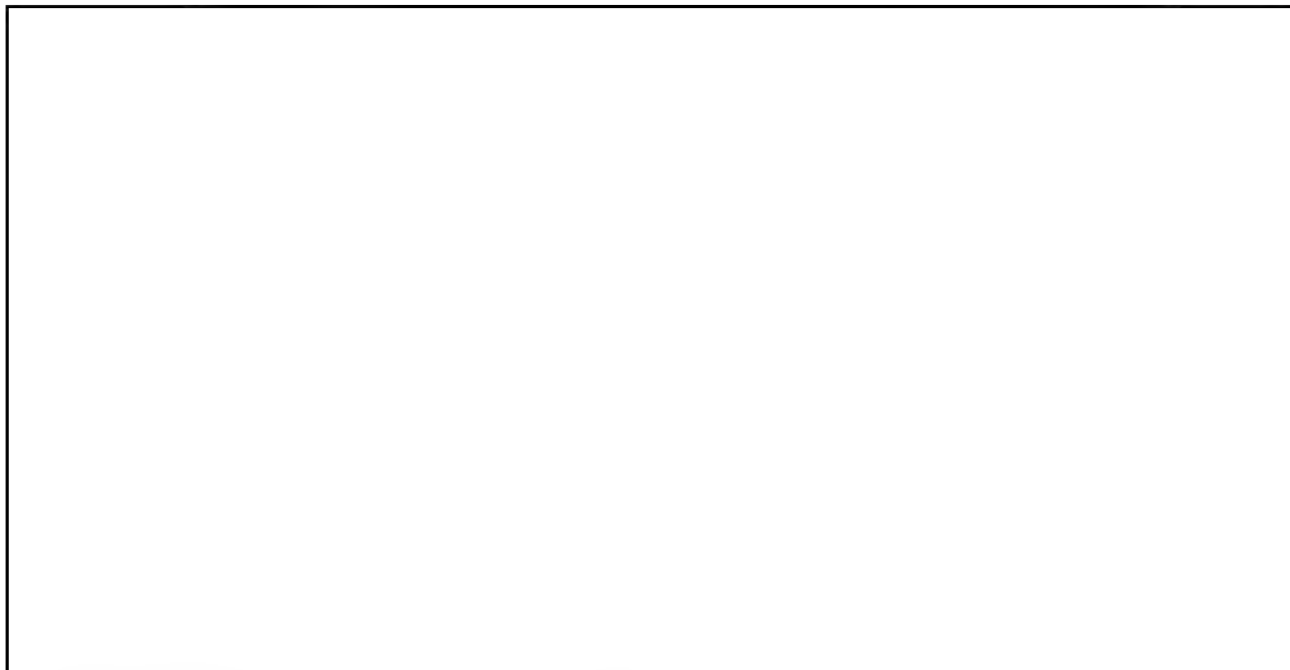
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BANGLADESH: Reports of Plotting

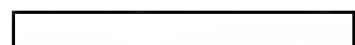
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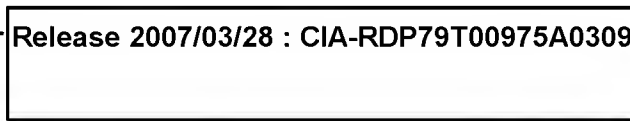
 Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman's popularity has slipped perceptibly since his landslide election victory in June. Although there is no hard evidence of an imminent coup attempt, there are increased reports of plotting. Zia is becoming more isolated from his power base in the military as he devotes more of his attention to preparations for the parliamentary election in December and to the organization of his badly fragmented party.

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 //No single issue has caused the growing discontent. Rather, the government appears to many local observers to have lost momentum since mid-June, and Zia's leadership appears lacking. Frustration still exists within the military over discrepancies in pay and social status with their civilian counterparts and over the corruption in government and among senior officers. Politicians are becoming increasingly outspoken against the government because it has not set a firm date for the election and has not spelled out the relationship between the new parliament and the strong executive.//

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 //Dissatisfaction with Zia's performance is not yet shared by the majority of the population. The military remains crucial in any threat to Zia, and advisers close to



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the President are confident that a program of retirements and transfers has effectively removed potential coup leaders from the scene.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //An eventual attempt against Zia is nevertheless probable. The absence of a specific issue to coalesce the disparate groups within the military who oppose him does not eliminate the potential for a sudden effort to change the regime--like the mutiny in October 1977.//

25X1 [REDACTED] //On balance, however, the chances are that Zia will remain in power, at least until after the parliamentary election in December. If Zia's party failed to win a majority, or if his government proved unable to handle the nation's political and economic problems, a coup attempt by the military would become a distinct possibility.//

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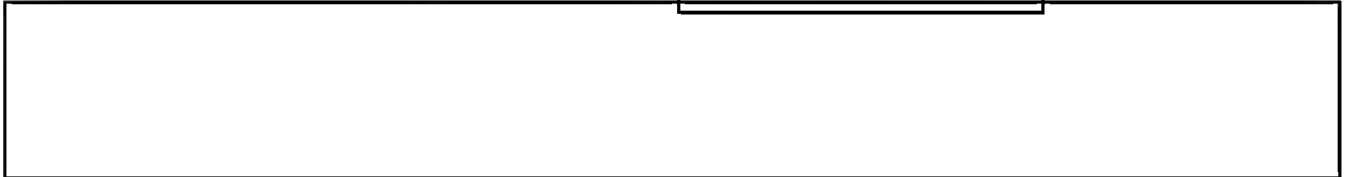
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India

Recent exceptionally heavy flooding of industrial areas in and near Calcutta is curtailing India's industrial growth this year. At current levels, industrial growth in fiscal year 1979 will probably be held to 4 to 5 percent, slightly better than in 1978 but less than half the 11-percent spurt in 1977.

Factories in parts of the states of West Bengal and Bihar, which together account for about one-fourth of national manufacturing output, will be closed for several weeks. The flooding of mines may cost 7 million to 8 million tons of coal, about 7 percent of national production, with resulting cuts in electric power and steel output.

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